

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 04130

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, FR

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (EPG)

REF: PARIS 3688

1. PAGNIEZ (QUAI CHIEF OF NATO AFFAIRS) GAVE US FEB. 9
HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE ROME MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT
EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (EPG). PAGNIEZ AND DELPECH
(FRENCH ARMAMENT DIRECTOR) WERE SENIOR FRENCH REPRESENT-
ATIVES AT FEBRUARY 2 MEETING. HE REPEATED MUCH OF THE
SUBSTANCE ALREADY REPORTED IN REFTEL AND SAID THAT NEXT
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MEETING OF EPG WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN APRIL OR

MAY, AT WHICH TIME EUROPEANS HOPE TO BE IN POSITION TO EXAMINE CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL ARMAMENT COOPERATION. FRENCH, SAID PAGNIEZ, APPROACHED WORK OF EPG IN VERY SERIOUS MANNER AND FROM "PRAGMATIC AND FLEXIBLE" POINT OF VIEW.

2. PAGNIEZ SAID THAT DELPECH HAD REFERRED TO INTER-OPERABILITY IN HIS OPENING REMARKS AT ROME MEETING, ALTHOUGH GOF SEES NEED TO ACHIEVE CLOSER EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN ARMAMENT PROCUREMENT AND PRODUCTION AS PRIMARY GOAL OF EPG. WHILE SUCH COOPERATION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE SOME IMPACT ON QUESTIONS OF INTER-OPERABILITY, EPG IS NOT LOOKED ON BY FRENCH AS "MAJOR FORUM" FOR CONSIDERATION OF INTEROPERABILITY QUESTIONS. (SEE SEPTTEL FOR VIEWS OF PAGNIEZ ON NATO INTEROPERABILITY.)

3. WE OBSERVED TO PAGNIEZ THAT FRENCH APPROACH TO ROME MEETING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF EPG SUGGESTS THAT FRENCH ARE TAKING MORE OPEN MINDED APPROACH TO QUESTIONS OF ARMAMENT COOPERATION. PAGNIEZ CONFIRMED THAT FRENCH ARE, INDEED, TAKING MORE PRAGMATIC AND FLEXIBLE APPROACH ON THIS SUBJECT THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE IN PAST. IN PARTICULAR, CONTINUED PAGNIEZ, FRENCH ARE LESS ENCUMBERED NOW BY "THEOLOGICAL" ARGUMENTS THAT HAVE HAMPERED PAST GOF EFFORTS TO "COOPERATE" WITH THEIR EUROPEAN ALLIES ON ARMAMENT MATTERS.

4. WE ALSO NOTED THAT WE HAD NOT SEEN ANY NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION IN FRANCE TO ROME MEETING, EVEN THOUGH BEFORE THE MEETING SOME OBSERVERS TRIED TO PORTRAY MEETING AS ATTEMPT BY FRANCE TO RE-ENTER NATO'S MILITARY SYSTEM THROUGH BACK DOOR. PAGNIEZ CONFIRMED THAT, ONE WEEK AFTER THE ROME MEETING, THERE HAD BEEN NO NEGATIVE RESPONSE WITHIN FRANCE TO FACT THAT FRANCE IS NOW PREPARED TO WORK WITH ITS TEN EUROPEAN ALLIES TOWARD CLOSER ARMAMENT COOPERATION. IN CLOSING, PAGNIEZ AGREED THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE EPG -- INCLUDING THE FRENCH -- SHOULD KEEP U.S. FULLY INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THAT ORGANIZATION.

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